

*Recent studies have indicated an explosion in the number of online pharmacies that distribute illegitimate medication*

Plainview, NY— Today, Congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington) and Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice joined in an effort to protect seniors buying drugs online. They provided tips to seniors on how to safely purchase drugs from online pharmacies and called for aggressive prosecution of those who attempt to sell counterfeit drugs online.

Rep. Israel said, “Buying prescription drugs online is a great option for seniors to compare prices and save money. However, with a recent explosion of online pharmacies selling counterfeit drugs, we must make sure our seniors are purchasing their prescriptions from reputable sources. This is why DA Rice and I are calling on the President’s U.S. Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator to immediately report to Congress on Administration efforts to curb illegal internet pharmacies and keep our seniors safe.”

DA Rice said, “Unscrupulous online pharmacy scammers take advantage of seniors looking for inexpensive prescription drugs costing them not only their money, but often compromising their health with dangerous fake medication. It's imperative that we educate seniors about how to safely purchase medications from reputable pharmacies, while cracking down on those who hawk dangerous or ineffective medication to those in need. I thank Congressman Israel for his leadership on this important public health issue.”

In recent years, many seniors have turned to online pharmacies to comparison shop when purchasing prescription drugs. The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy’s Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites (VIPPS) program and its accompanying VIPPS seal of approval identifies to the public those online pharmacy sites that are appropriately licensed, are legitimately operating via the Internet, and that have successfully completed a rigorous criteria review and survey.

Seniors should be aware that this seal exists and always look for it when purchasing drugs from an online site. Additionally, seniors can contact the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy

to make sure an online pharmacy is legitimate.

According to the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, 97 percent of all Internet pharmacies do not require a prescription, are not appropriately licensed and sell unregulated drugs.

While the first ever U.S. Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, Victoria A. Espinel, was appointed in 2009 by President Obama, she has yet to submit a report to Congress outlining government efforts to curb illegal online pharmacies. Rep. Israel's letter calls for this report to be immediately submitted.

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